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ABSTRACT

Following an exhaustive review of the literature, over 60 items relevant to the relationship between authoritarianism and prejudice were identified. They include such "fugitive" items as conference papers and master's theses. This paper reviews the findings of these studies regarding prejudice. It concludes that, while some writers have stressed the need to emphasize social and cultural influences and others have suggested other variables as alternatives to authoritarianism, the value of that concept as a partial explanation of prejudice has won wide acceptance. Included are 69 references to the literature. (Author)

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THE INFLUENCE OF AUTHORITARIANISM UPON PREJUDICE: A REVIEW

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Prejudice, particularly anti-semitism, was the original impetus for research leading to The Authoritarian Personality (Adorno et al., 1950). The major finding reported in that volume was that prejudice is part of a larger attitudinal syndrome, which can be measured by the F Scale, and which is associated with certain personality needs and defense mechanisms. The authors suggested that early subjection to rigid authority leads to extreme hostility toward authority figures and to the norms they enforce, coupled with strong identification with authority figures and fear of personal impulses that might lead the person to attack authority or to violate norms. As a defense against his anti-authority impulses, the individual becomes extremely submissive toward authority, admiring power and toughness and being rigidly conventional, while displacing hostility toward authority onto targets that are weak and against which aggression is clothed in some semblance of moral approval.

One indication of a great study is the amount of controversy and research that it generates. Both prestigious and influential, The Authoritarian Personality was one of the few books to have been criticized before it was even published (Luchins, 1950) and it has inspired an enormous volume of research and controversy (Christie & Jahoda, 1954; Titus & Hollander, 1954; Christie and Cook, 1956; Kirscht & Dillehay, 1967; Hanson, 1974, 1975). The purpose of the present paper is to review findings of studies which have examined the relationship between authoritarianism and prejudice.

The Research

Among college students, authoritarianism was found to be associated with anti-black attitudes by Kelly and his colleagues (1958), by Siegman (1958), by Hites and Kellog (1964), and by Sedlacek and Brooks (1972). It was also found to be associated with Tendency-to-Discriminate scores among southern university students (Knapp, 1971) and with social distance scores in Germany, the United States, and Japan (Triandis et al., 1965). Parental authoritarianism was significantly associated with anti-black prejudice in one school, while a non-significant positive association was found in a second (Harris et al., 1950). Stroup and Landis (1965) found significant correlations between authoritarianism and prejudice among freshmen and sophomores but insignificant (although positive) correlations among juniors and seniors. In studies among South African university students, authoritarianism was found to be correlated

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with prejudice toward blacks (Colman & Lambley, 1970).

In an experimental situation, highly authoritarian college students exhibited greater aggression toward members of outgroups than did low authoritarians (Epstein, 1966). Among Arab engineering students in the United States, authoritarianism was significantly related to prejudice toward Jews, but not toward three other minority groups of the Arab world (Diab, 1959). Conversely, among Israelis, authoritarianism was associated with prejudice against Arabs but not with prejudice against North Africans (Siegman, 1961). In an early study of college students, F Scale scores were related to a wide variety of measures of negative attitudes toward minority groups (Campbell & McCandles, 1951).

Authoritarianism was found to be associated with prejudice in a stratified sample in Nashville (McDill, 1961), in random samples of residents in Rome, Italy and a Teamsters local in Minneapolis (Rose, 1966), in a sample of residents in Lansing (Roberts & Rokeach, 1956), in a sample from a small South Dakota community (Photiadis & Bigger, 1962), in a cross-section of adults in Baltimore and in Minneapolis/St. Paul (Flowerman et al., 1950), and in a random sample from Indianapolis (Martin, 1961).

Among Chinese students in the United States, authoritarianism was associated with negative attitudes toward the U.S. (Chang, 1973) and among urban black males, it was negatively associated with both anti-white feeling and racial pride (Paige, 1970). Among Jewish adults, authoritarianism was associated with both social distance and anti-semitism (Radke-Yarrow & Lande, 1953).

Middleton (1959) found highly authoritarian white college students to demonstrate a slightly greater tendency to view anti-black jokes as humerous than did low authoritarians, while Siegel (1954) found authoritarianism to be significantly related to stereotyping among freshen women at Stanford University. Adults attending an intergroup relations workshop were found to be "slightly anti-authoritarian" (Levinson & Schermerhorn, 1951) and among those attending a desegregation institute at a southern university, authoritarianism was associated with negative attitudes toward desegregation (Kinnick & Plattor, 1967, 1968).

Authoritarianism has also been examined in relation to various other outgroups. In a sample of over 1,500 junior and senior high school students, Bordua (1961) found F Scale scores to be correlated with intolerance of non-conformists. Undergraduates with negative attitudes toward homosexuals tended to be authoritarian (Smith, 1971) and, among a sample of college males, F Scale scores were associated with negative attitudes toward feminine tendencies in men (Allen, 1954). Authoritarianism was found to be highly correlated with negative attitudes toward women in a sample of males from midwestern colleges and

universities (Nadler, 1953; Nadler & Morrow, 1959). Authoritarianism was similarly correlated with negative attitudes toward blindness among collegians (Cowen et al., 1958). However, professionals are not exempt from such bias. For example, case histories of lower class individuals were judged more negatively by authoritarian psychiatric residents and social work students (Kurtz & Hoffnung, 1970). Similarly, high authoritarian medical students were less likely to decrease in negative attitudes toward mental illness (Crow et al., 1970).

However, not all studies have yielded supportive findings. In only one of four Texas high school groups (114 white seniors) was a significant correlation found between authoritarianism and unfavorable attitudes toward integration (Greenberg et al., 1957). Of five Texas college groups studied, only among graduate students was a significant correlation found between authoritarianism and unfavorable attitudes toward integration (Greenberg & Hutto, 1958). In a study of northern college students, authoritarianism was similarly not related to acceptance of segregation (Shaffer, 1964) and in an experimental study, it was not associated with hostility toward blacks (Benjamin, 1964). Bohlke's (1960) hypothesis that in a college course on India, the less authoritarian students would show a greater decline in social distance scores toward Indians was not supported. Fishman (1961) reported that in an urban area becoming integrated,the highest F Scale scores of his entire white sample were obtained among those still residing in blocks that had become predominately black. Of course it is impossible to determine the correct causal sequence and, because of methodological difficulties, one cannot conclude that high authoritarians were less prejudiced.

Kaufman (1957) argues that it is not authoritarianism but rather status concern that offers the most satisfactory explanation of anti-semitism. Others (Srole, 1951; Roberts et al., 1952; Roberts & Rokeach, 1956; McDill, 1961; Rose, 1966) contend that anomie is as good, if not better, predictor of prejudice than is authoritarianism. However, based upon his analyses of response patterns, Peabody (1961) argues that the positive relation usually found between F and prejudice scale scores is entirely the result of covariation of the same factors important within the separate scales. Most important in this regard is agreement set. Rhyne (1962:46) also contends that the correlation is spurious, resulting from "variations in exposure to the ideas contained in the scales."

It has been suggested (Orpen, 1971) that the relationship between authoritarianism and prejudice may be culture-bound in the sense that it exists only under certain cultural conditions. More specifically, the relationship between prejudice and personality reflects whether or not the prevailing cultural norms sanction prejudiced beliefs. In the case of cultural settings where prejudiced norms are dominant, individuals will be encouraged to hold intolerant attitudes

irrespective of their personality characteristics. However, in settings where such norms do not prevail, the individual's personality dynamics will be a more important determinant of intolerance.

While Prothro (1953) presented data supportive of this hypothesis, it was first explicitly tested by Pettigrew (1958, 1959). That writer found that while South Afrikaner students were very highly prejudiced, they were comparable in authoritarianism to less highly prejudiced residents in the southern United States. He explained that "While externalizing personality factors do not account for the students' unusually prejudiced attitudes concerning [black] Africans, variables which reflect the dominant norms of the white society prove to be important." More specifically, "Students who are especially responsive to these norms - those who were born in Africa, those who identify with the Nationalist party, those who are upwardly mobile, and those who have been molded by the conservative traditions of the Afrikaans-speaking people - tend to be intolerant of Africans to some degree, regardless of their basic personality structure" (Pettigrew, 1959:35). This general conclusion was also supported by his data from four small towns in Georgia and North Carolina.

More recently, several writers (Orpen, 1971, 1971a, 1973; Orpen & Tsapogas, 1972; Orpen & Van der Schyff, 1972; Lambley, 1973; Colman & Lambley, 1970) have also found support for the culture-bound thesis in South Africa and Williams (1966) found partial support for it in the United States. However, non-supportive data have also been obtained in both South Africa (Orpen, 1970) and in the United States (Christie & Garcia, 1971).

Conclusion

In the nearly thirty years since its publication, The Authoritarian Personality has generated an enormous volume of research. While some writers have stressed the need to emphasize social and cultural variation and others have suggested other variables as alternatives to authoritarianism, the value of that concept as a partial explanation of prejudice appears to have won wide acceptance..

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